TELIDON

Canada

Photo-Telidon can describe images as a series of
scanned points in color or in black and white. The
result is a photographic image of the original.
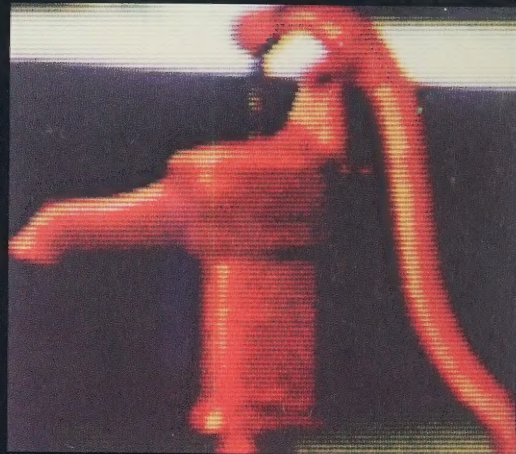
A world at your fingertips

Imagine using your TV set to do your shopping, order your theatre tickets, make your travel arrangements, do your banking, get information from a library — and many other everyday tasks. This is not some dream of the future. This is Telidon today.

Telidon is an advanced and easy-to-use videotex system that uses the newest developments in graphics, telecommunications and computer technologies.

Videotex and teletext

Videotex is to the 1980s what television was to the '30s, and telephone to the 1870s. It is a two-way communication system that links our TV sets to computers and memory banks. Videotex adaptors can be attached to or built into home TV sets, turning them into computer terminals which can draw a variety of information services from the electronic memory of other
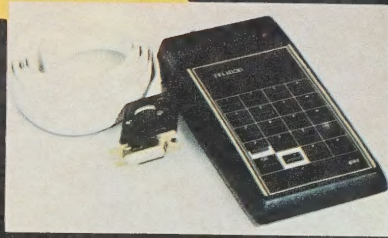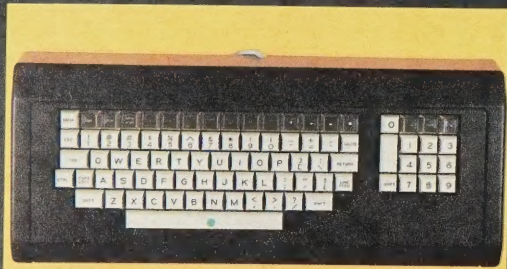
The Telidon user can access data bases merely by pushing a few buttons on a keypad or keyboard.

computers. Users can obtain information they want from the system and also send information back.

Teletext is the name given to the broadcast version of videotex. In this system the information is broadcast over the spare or unused lines of a TV signal or over a cable TV channel. It is transmitted in high-speed bursts every few seconds. The viewer pushes buttons to choose a particular page, and the information is displayed almost instantly on the TV screen.

The Telidon system

Telidon is the Canadian videotex system. Invented at the Communications Research Centre in Ottawa, it was first made public in

August, 1978. It has made Canada a world leader in two-way TV technology.

The Telidon system consists basically of three components:

— data bases connected to a central computer;
— a modified TV set with a push-button unit like a pocket calculator or a keyboard like a typewriter, for getting or sending information;
— a transmission link, such as telephone lines, cable, optical fibres, television broadcast, satellites, or even laser.

By simply pressing buttons on a keypad, information you want appears on your TV screen almost instantly.
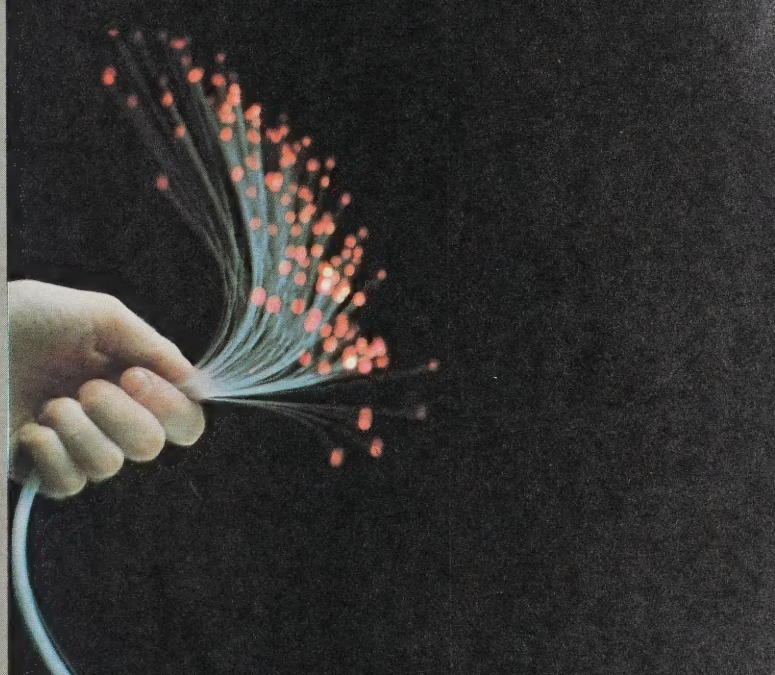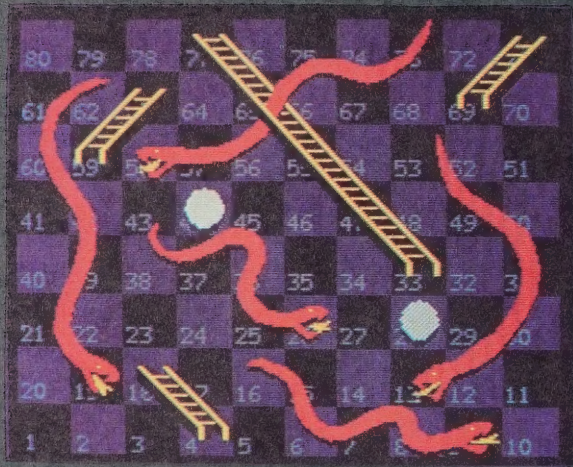
The information stored in the central computer is delivered by the transmission link to a decoder at your TV set. This decoder transforms it into printed words or images on the screen.

Telidon lets you, the user, choose the information you want, at the time you want it. There is no schedule that must be followed.

Telidon has the capacity to be an electronic school, a library, a newspaper, a bank, a supermarket, a post office, a travel agent, and much more.

You will be able to use it to request information of all sorts, answer questions, leave messages, play computer games, carry out calculations, study courses — the possibilities are endless.

Telidon is a superior videotex technology. The designers wanted to ensure that the system would never become obsolete, and made it flexible enough to accept any forseeable changes in technology. The system is designed to work with a wide variety of TV sets, whether European, North American, or even some future display technology. Almost any means of transmission can be used. And many different computer data bases can be "accessed" by Telidon — some old, some new, and some just now being created.

One of the reasons Telidon is better than other videotex systems is its ability to produce superb color graphics.

Lines are smoother, more detail is possible, and images can even be animated.
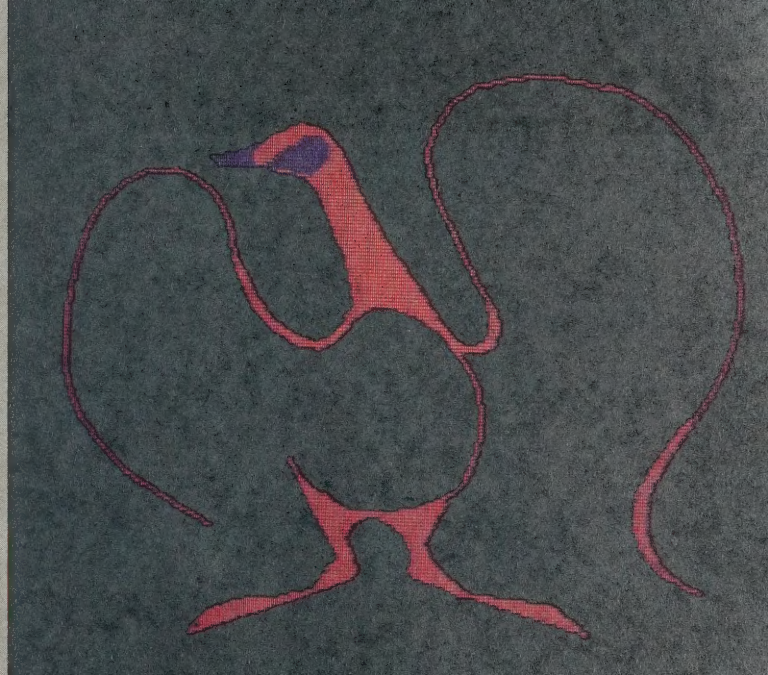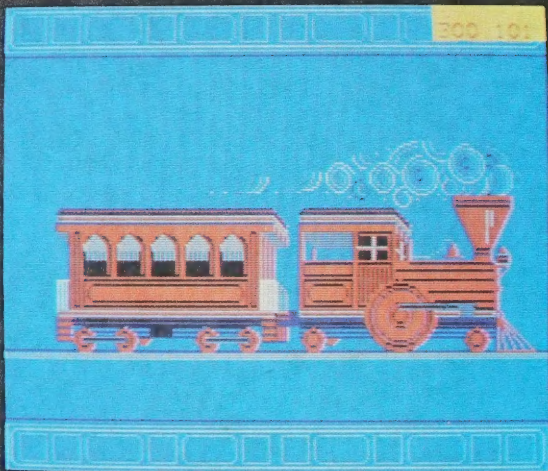
Standards

In our rapidly changing society it is important to have a videotex system that is consistent throughout the world.

Telidon is now the accepted videotex standard for North America, and is rapidly becoming the preferred standard for government and commercial users in other parts of the world.

In November, 1980, Telidon was officially ratified as one of the world standards for videotex by the agency of the United Nations responsible for setting worldwide telecommunications standards.

In May, 1981, two giant North American communications corporations, American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T) and the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), announced their support for videotex and teletext standards based on Telidon's superior graphics ability and coding format.

This means that consumers all over North America will be able to access a vast array of electronic publishing and other services from any place in Canada and the United States with the same equipment.

Videotex equipment manufacturers in France, England and Finland have also recognized the superior graphics capabilities of Telidon and have recently introduced prototype terminals which use Telidon coding methods.

How to use Telidon

Dialogue with Telidon is very simple. Information in electronic data banks is arranged in "pages". Each page has a number and represents the information that can be seen on the screen. An index lists the categories of information and the page number for each one. The user proceeds, step by step, from a general index to a specific page. No special training is needed.

To summon up any of the thousands of pages of stored information, you press a few buttons to spell out a code, obtain a table of contents on the area of information required, and then press more buttons to get the specific item you wish.

Dales   "Wedge"
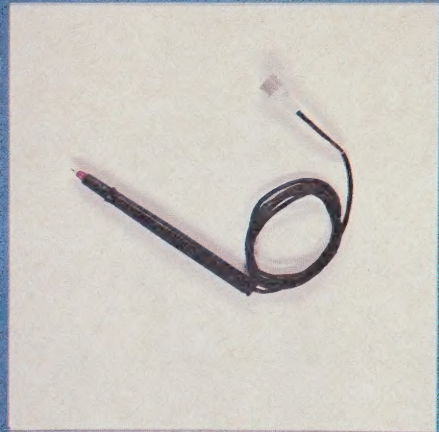
A graphics tablet can be used to put information or drawings into the Telidon system.

Electronic publishing: a new industry

Creating pages for Telidon is also very simple. No special training is necessary. The input system consists of a keyboard, and other devices like a 'joystick' or a graphics tablet that lets you draw "electronically" on the TV screen. A page of text can be created in about five minutes. The equipment can even produce life-like portraits, and, Telidon can even be used to reproduce full-color photographs. The user has full creative control over the pages. Once a page is created, it can then be stored in a computer, and made available on demand to any Telidon user.

As Telidon becomes available, a new industry — an electronic publishing industry — will use

this equipment to provide a whole range of Telidon-based information services.

What Telidon will do for you

Telidon brings a world of information to your fingertips, and can add many new dimensions to your life.

For example, if you wish to buy a house, you could call up real estate listings, indicate the district you want and the price range you are considering, and the TV screen would show a list of addresses. Choose one, and a drawing of the house would appear on the screen. Push more buttons and a floor plan would appear. This could be followed by prices, taxes, mortgage
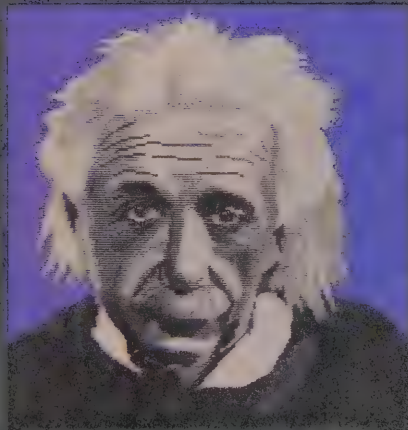
rates, credit terms, and other information. Without leaving home, you could learn as much as if you had visited a real estate agent.

Or, if you want a hotel reservation in a distant city, you could press a number to call up a general directory for that city, and find the "Hotels" category. You would then see pages listing hotels, addresses, telephone numbers, rates, and other pertinent information. You could then use your Telidon set to make a reservation and charge it to your credit card — all without leaving your easy chair.

For shopping, you could press a button and see on your TV set the prices of various items at stores. Specials or bargains could be noted. Telidon would then let you order the items you want, at the touch of a button.

Many other uses will be available, limited only by our imagination. Electronic mail, programmed learning courses, weather forecasts, electronic "yellow pages", games, stock market information and electronic newspapers are only some of the possibilities.

Equipment

Telidon equipment is now being made by companies such as Electrohome Ltd. of Kitchener, Northern Telecom of Montreal, SED Systems Inc. of Saskatoon, AEL Microtel of Vancouver, the Hemton Corp. of Ottawa and Norpak of Pakenham, Ont. Telidon systems are also being provided by Infomart of Toronto, an electronic publisher.
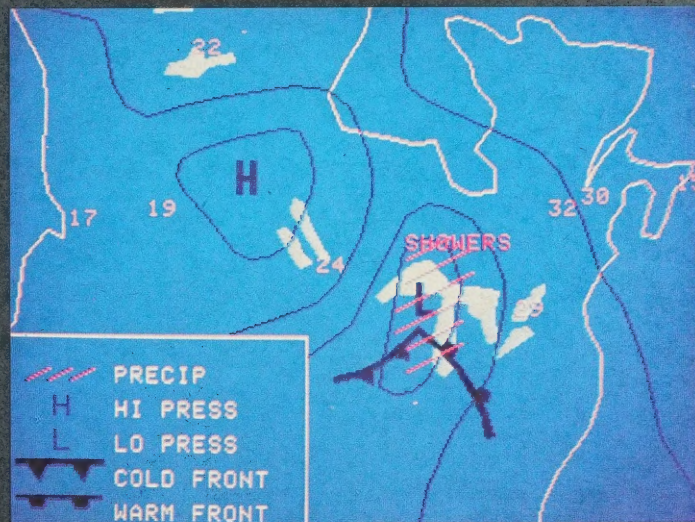
When will Telidon be available?

Many field trials — and some commercial systems — across Canada are being operated or planned by broadcasters, cable companies, telephone companies, electronic publishers and others. These trials are being conducted to test equipment, service, and the potential market for these electronic information systems. Fourteen Telidon projects have already been announced in Canada and 20 more systems will be in operation by early 1983. In the United States, a variety of companies and organizations are participating in trials, have bought equipment or endorsed Telidon. Telidon systems and equipment have also been sold to organizations in Venezuela, Australia and elsewhere.

These trials and commercial systems are expected to expand to provide more generally available Telidon services.

The Future

The development of Telidon has been rapid. In the future, Telidon may well form part of a system that will perform many of the services envisaged in the wired cities of tomorrow.

Telidon is emerging as one of the key technologies that are leading us into the information age.

Telidon can reproduce a virtually unlimited range of colors and shades of grey.

For further information, contact:
Information Services
Department of Communications
300 Slater Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0C8
Telephone (613) 995-8185

or

Telidon Office
Department of Communications
300 Slater Street
Suite 2000
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0C8
Telephone (613) 996-4243

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Department of Communications

Gouvernement du Canada
Ministère des Communications